

In the Claims

1. – 30. (Canceled)

31. (New) A marketing assisting apparatus in which a plurality of customer terminal devices of customers and a plurality of salesperson terminal devices of salespersons in charge of said customers are interconnected over a network, and in which messages are communicated with said customer terminal devices and said salesperson terminal devices over said network; said apparatus comprising:

a plurality of customer databases each adapted for storage therein of a customer table to which private data of a customer has been entered;

a plurality of company databases each adapted for storage therein of a company table of a company, supervising a plurality of salespersons belonging to said company, a plurality of salesperson tables, each provided for each salesperson belonging to said company, and a selection registration table for correlating said customer tables and the salesperson tables to each other;

a selection registration section for accepting registration from said customer terminal device of identification data of the salesperson approved by said customer and for generating/holding the selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of the salesperson identified by said identification data with said customer table;

a message database for holding a message sent from said salesperson to said customer and a message sent from said customer to said salesperson;

retrieving means for retrieving the customer table correlated with said salesperson table by said selection registration table;

a salesperson side message interface for assisting in formulation of a message to said customer by said salesperson terminal device, with generation of said selection registration table as an incentive; said salesperson side message interface also reading out the message formulated by said customer from said message database and sending the message thus read out to said salesperson terminal device; and

a customer side message interface for reading out the message prepared by said salesperson from said message database to send the message thus read out to said customer terminal device, and for assisting in formulation of the message by said customer terminal device; wherein

at least one of said company databases is owned by a service provider; at least one of the salesperson tables of the company database of said service provider is correlated with the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of the totality of said company databases, inclusive of said company database of said system provider, by said selection registration table; and wherein

at least one of the salesperson tables of each of the company databases excepting said company database of said system provider is a salesperson table belonging to a manager of each company; the salesperson table of said company manager is correlated with the totality of the customer tables correlated by said selection registration table;

said customer side message interface reading out a message concerning a specified one of the companies of said company databases excepting said company database of said system provider from said message database and transmitting the message read out over said network to the totality of customer tables correlated with said salesperson table of said service provider or to customer terminal devices of customer

tables extracted by said retrieving means subject to preset retrieving conditions; said customer side message interface on receipt of an acknowledge message from each of said customer terminal devices allowing said selection registration section to generate the selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of said company manager of said specified company with the customers of the sources of transmission of said acknowledge messages;

said salesperson side message interface assisting in formulating messages to customers of said customer tables extracted under said preset retrieving conditions by said retrieving means from the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of the company managers of said companies, and allowing the messages formulated to be stored in said message database; and

said customer side message interface transmitting the messages formulated to said customer terminal devices, over said network, in the name of said company managers or in the name of salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than those belonging to said company managers and which are correlated with said customer tables; said salesperson side message interface transmitting the messages formulated to salesperson terminal devices which are different than those belonging to said company managers and which are correlated with said customer tables.

32. (New) The marketing assisting apparatus according to claim 31 wherein the message transmitted to said customer in the name of the company manager or in the names of salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than those belonging to said company managers includes a return message to the message from said customer.

33. (New) The marketing assisting apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said salesperson side message interface makes display so that the messages transmitted/ received by said salespersons, directly in charge of said customers, of said salesperson tables different than those belonging to said company managers, may be distinguished by said salesperson terminal devices from the messages transmitted/ received by said company managers.

34. (New) The marketing assisting apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said salesperson side message interface allows the salesperson terminal device belonging to said company manager of each company to browse the transmission/receipt hysteresis of messages with said customers of the totality of salespersons of the company databases excepting said company database of said system provider.

35. (New) The marketing assisting apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said salesperson side message interface provides the salesperson terminal devices with customer-based use data over the network.

36. (New) The marketing assisting apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said company databases excepting said company database of said system provider group together a plurality of customer tables out of the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of the company managers.

37. (New) The marketing assisting apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said retrieving means includes

narrowing-down means having unread message extracting means for extracting unread messages in the name of each company manager or in the name of the salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than those belonging to said company managers, and responding customer extracting means of extracting the customers whose messages to the company managers or to salespersons of the salesperson tables different than those belonging to said company managers have been received within a preset time;

customer name extracting means for extracting customers of interest based on all or part of customer names entered as the retrieving conditions;

said retrieving means extracting preset customers by said narrowing-down means and/or said customer name extracting means.

38. (New) The marketing assisting apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said salesperson side message interface performs the processing of refraining from transmitting all messages in case it is unable to transmit the messages to all of said customers simultaneously.

39. (New) The marketing assisting apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said customer side message interface displays on said customer terminal device the salespersons of the salesperson tables correlated with the totality of customer tables of the

company databases other than the database of said service provider, provided that the salespersons displayed are not approved by said customer.

40. (New) The marketing assisting apparatus according to claim 31 wherein, each time a new customer table is added to said salesperson tables different than those belonging to said company managers, said new customer table is added to said totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of said company managers.

41. (New) A data processing method by a marketing assisting apparatus in which a plurality of customer terminal devices of customers and a plurality of salesperson terminal device of salespersons in charge of said customers are interconnected over a network, and in which messages are communicated with said customer terminal devices and said salesperson terminal devices over a network; said apparatus including

a plurality of customer databases each adapted for storage therein of a customer table to which private data of a customer has been entered;

a plurality of company databases each adapted for storage therein of a company table of a company, supervising a plurality of salespersons belonging to said company, a plurality of salesperson tables each provided for each salesperson belonging to said company, and a selection registration table for correlating said customer tables and the salesperson tables to each other;

a selection registration section for accepting registration from said customer terminal device of identification data of the salesperson approved by said customer and

for generating/holding the selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of the salesperson identified by said identification data with said customer table;

a message database for holding a message sent from said salesperson to said customer and a message sent from said customer to said salesperson:

retrieving means for retrieving the customer table correlated with said salesperson table by said selection registration table:

a salesperson side message interface for assisting in formulation of a message to said customer by said salesperson terminal device, with generation of said selection registration table as an incentive; said salesperson side message interface also reading out the message formulated by said customer from said message database and sending the message thus read out to said salesperson terminal device; and

a customer side message interface for reading out the message prepared by said salesperson from said message database to send the message thus read out to said customer terminal device, and for assisting in formulation of the message by said customer terminal device;

at least one of said company databases being owned by a service provider; at least one of the salesperson tables of the company database of said service provider being correlated with the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of the company databases, inclusive of said company database of said system provider, by said selection registration table;

at least one of the salesperson tables of the company databases, excepting said company database of said system provider, being a salesperson table belonging to a company manager of each company; the salesperson table of said company manager

being correlated with the totality of the customer tables correlated by said selection registration table;

said data processing method comprising;

a step of said customer side message interface reading out a message concerning a specified one of the companies of the company databases excepting said company database of said system provider from said message database and transmitting the message read out over said network to the totality of customer tables correlated with said salesperson table of said service provider or to customer terminal devices of customer tables extracted by said retrieving means subject to preset retrieving conditions;

a step of said selection registration section generating the selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of said company manager of said specified company with the customer of the source of transmission of an acknowledge message from each of said customer terminal devices when said salesperson side message interface has received said acknowledge message;

a step of said salesperson side message interface assisting in formulating messages to customers of said customer tables extracted under said preset retrieving conditions by said retrieving means from the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of said company managers, and allowing the messages formulated to be stored in said message database; and

a step of said customer side message interface transmitting the messages formulated to said customer terminal devices, over said network, in the name of said company managers or in the name of salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than those belonging to said company managers and which are correlated with

said customer tables; said salesperson side message interface transmitting the messages formulated to salesperson terminal devices which are different than those belonging to said company managers and which are correlated with said customer tables.

42. (New) The marketing assisting method according to claim 41 wherein the message transmitted to said customer in the name of the company manager or in the name of salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than those belonging to said company managers includes a return message to the message from said customer.

43. (New) The marketing assisting method according to claim 41 wherein said salesperson side message interface makes display so that the messages transmitted/received by said salespersons, directly in charge of said customers, of said salesperson tables different than those belonging to said company managers, may be distinguished from the messages transmitted/received by said company managers.

44. (New) The marketing assisting method according to claim 41 further comprising the step of:

said salesperson side message interface allowing the salesperson terminal device belonging to said company manager of each company to browse the transmission/ receipt hysteresis of messages with said customers of the totality of salespersons of the company databases excepting said company database of said system provider.

45. (New) The marketing assisting method according to claim 41 further comprising the step of:

said salesperson side message interface providing the salesperson terminal devices with customer-based use data over the network.

46. (New) The marketing assisting method according to claim 41 comprising the step of said company databases excepting said company database of said system provider grouping together a plurality of customer tables out of the totality of customer tables correlated with said at least one salesperson table.

47. (New) The marketing assisting method according to claim 41 wherein retrieval carried out by said retrieving means comprises:

a narrowing-down step having a unread message extracting sub-step of extracting unread messages in the name of each company manager or of the salespersons of said salesperson tables different than those belonging to said company managers, and a responding customer extracting sub-step of extracting the customers whose messages to the company managers or to salespersons of the salesperson terminal devices different than those belonging to said company managers have been received within a preset time; and

a customer name extracting step of extracting customers of interest based on all or part of customer names entered as the retrieving conditions; wherein

the customers of interest are extracted by said narrowing-down step and/or said customer name extracting step.

48. (New) The marketing assisting method according to claim 41 further comprising:

a step of the salesperson side message interface performing the processing of refraining from transmitting all messages in case it is unable to transmit the messages to all of said customers simultaneously.

49. (New) The marketing assisting method according to claim 41 further comprising the step of said salesperson side message interface displaying on said customer terminal device the salespersons of the salesperson tables correlated with the customer tables of the company databases other than the company database of said service provider, provided that the salespersons displayed are not approved by said customer.

50. (New) The marketing assisting method according to claim 41 further comprising:

a step of said company databases, excepting said company database of said system provider, adding, each time a new customer table is added to said salesperson tables different than those belonging to said company managers, said new customer table to the totality of customer tables correlated with said at least one salesperson table.

51. (New) A recording medium having recorded thereon a program for having data processing executed by a marketing assisting apparatus in which a plurality of customer terminal devices of customers and a plurality of salesperson terminal devices

of salespersons in charge of said customers are interconnected over a network, and in which messages are communicated with said customer terminal devices and said salesperson terminal devices over a network; said apparatus including

a plurality of customer databases each storing therein a customer table to which private data of a customer has been entered;

a plurality of company databases each storing therein a company table of a company, supervising a plurality of salespersons belonging to said company, a plurality of salesperson tables each provided for each salesperson belonging to said company, and a selection registration table for correlating said customer tables and the salesperson tables to each other;

a selection registration section for accepting registration from said customer terminal device of identification data of the salesperson approved by said customer and for generating/holding the selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of the salesperson identified by said identification data with said customer table;

a message database for holding a message sent from said salesperson to said customer and a message sent from said customer to said salesperson:

retrieving means for retrieving the customer table correlated with said salesperson table by said selection registration table;

a salesperson side message interface for assisting in formulation of a message to said customer by said salesperson terminal device, with generation of said selection registration table as an incentive; said salesperson side message interface also reading out the message formulated by said customer from said message database and sending the message thus readout to said salesperson terminal device; and

a customer side message interface for reading out the message prepared by said salesperson from said message database to send the message to said customer terminal device, and for assisting in formulation of the message by said customer terminal device;

at least one of said company databases being owned by a service provider; at least one of the salesperson tables of the company database of said service provider being correlated with the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of the company databases, inclusive of said company database of said system provider, by said selection registration table;

at least one of the salesperson tables of each of the company tables, excepting said company database of said system provider, being a salesperson table belonging to a company manager of each company; the salesperson table of said company manager being correlated with the totality of the customer tables correlated by said selection registration table;

wherein a method for data processing by said marketing assisting apparatus comprises:

a step of said customer side message interface reading out a message concerning a specified one of the companies of the company databases excepting said company database of said system provider, from said message database and transmitting the message read out from said message database over said network to the totality of customer tables correlated with said salesperson table of said service provider or to customer terminal devices of customer tables extracted by said retrieving means subject to preset retrieving conditions;

a step of said selection registration section generating a selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of said company manager of said specified company with the customer of the sources of transmission of an acknowledge message from said customer terminal devices when said salesperson side message interface has received said acknowledge message;

a step of said salesperson side message interface assisting in formulating messages to customers extracted under said preset retrieving conditions by said retrieving means from the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of said company managers, and allowing the messages formulated to be stored in said message database; and

a step of said customer side message interface transmitting the messages formulated to said customer terminal devices, over said network, in the name of said company managers or in the name of salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than that belonging to said company manager and which are correlated with said customer tables; said salesperson side message interface transmitting the messages formulated to the salesperson terminal devices of said salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than those belonging to said company managers and which are correlated with said customer tables.

52. (New) A program for having data processing executed by a marketing assisting apparatus in which a plurality of customer terminal devices of customers and a plurality of salesperson terminal device of salespersons in charge of said customers are interconnected over a network, and in which messages are communicated with said

customer terminal devices and said salesperson terminal devices over a network; said apparatus including

a plurality of customer databases each storing therein a customer table to which private data of a customer has been entered;

a plurality of company databases each storing therein a company table of a company, supervising a plurality of salespersons belonging to said company, a plurality of salesperson tables each provided for each salesperson belonging to said company, and a selection registration table for correlating said customer tables and said salesperson tables to each other;

a selection registration section for accepting registration from said customer terminal device of identification data of the salesperson approved by said customer and for generating/ holding the selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of the salesperson identified by said identification data with said customer table;

a message database for holding a message sent from said salesperson to said customer and a message sent from said customer to said salesperson:

retrieving means for retrieving the customer table correlated with said salesperson table by said selection registration table:

a salesperson side message interface for assisting in formulation of a message to said customer by said salesperson terminal device, with generation of said selection registration table as an incentive; said salesperson side message interface also reading out the message formulated by said customer from said message database and sending the message thus read out to said salesperson terminal device; and

a customer side message interface for reading out the message prepared by said salesperson from said message database to send the message to said customer terminal device, and for assisting in formulation of the message by said customer terminal device;

at least one of said company databases being owned by a service provider; at least one of the salesperson tables of the company database of said service provider being correlated with the totality of customer tables, correlated with the salesperson tables of the company databases, inclusive of said company database of said system provider, by said selection registration table;

at least one of the salesperson tables of each of the company databases, excepting said company database of said system provider, being a salesperson table belonging to a company manager of each company; the salesperson table of said company manager being correlated with the totality of the customer tables correlated by said selection registration table; wherein

a method for data processing by said marketing assisting apparatus comprises

a step of said customer side message interface reading out a message concerning a specified one of the companies of the company databases, excepting that owned by said system provider, from said message database, and transmitting the message read out from said message database over said network to the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson table of said service provider or to customer terminal devices of customer tables extracted by said retrieving means subject to preset retrieving conditions;

a step of said selection registration section generating a selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of said company manager of said specified company with the customer of the source of transmission of an acknowledge message from each of

said customer terminal devices, when said customer side message interface has received said acknowledge message;

a step of said salesperson side message interface assisting in formulating messages to customers extracted under said preset retrieving conditions by said retrieving means from the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of said company managers, and allowing the messages formulated to be stored in said message database; and

a step of said customer side message interface transmitting the messages formulated to said customer terminal devices, over said network, in the name of said company managers or in the name of salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than that belonging to said company manager and which are correlated with said customer tables; said salesperson side message interface transmitting the messages formulated to said salesperson terminal device of said salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than that belonging to said company manager and which are correlated with said customer tables.